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VALEDICTORY ADDRESS

TO THE

GRADUATES OF THE CINCINNATI COLLEGE OF
MEDICINE AND SURGERY,

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ADDRESS.

The recurrence of a period like the present, is characterized by a degree of interest which belongs to few ordinary events. The era of nominal pupilage is passing away, to be succeeded by another, at the dawn of which the student is ushered into a new sphere of action. The transition, with its age-lasting consequences, concerns not merely the members of the graduating class; their friends, their teachers, the Profession, and the public at large, all have an interest in it. Conventional usage, sanctioned by the Profession, has established certain requisitions, which collectively constitute a test of qualification in all well organized Colleges. The Trustees, Censors, Curators, or by whatsoever name that Board is known, in whom is vested legislative authority, in the premises, have paid respect to the wisdom, the foresight, and I may with truth say, the philanthropy which has in these requisitions, placed a safe-guard around the rights of the people, in time of sickness. To the Board of Professors has been assigned the judicial functions, which become necessary to execute these conventional laws; as well as the didactic and exemplary, which precede the final ordeal. To them therefore the occasion is one of absorbing interest. In the issue is involved the fidelity with which the trust reposed in them has been held, the degree of success which has been attained by the exercise of their professorial functions, and their individual and collective reputation. The friends of the student, at such a crisis in the preliminary struggle for prosperity and fame, cannot look on with indifference. Consanguine affection, and high personal regard, keep them alive to his welfare. The

Profession governed by high-toned principles; having regard to the honor of their calling; scrupulously considerate for the welfare of diseased humanity; look with heart-felt emotion at the continual encroachments of the hydra-headed monster quackery, which insidiously besieges the credulous public, changeful as the phases of the moon' and as oft repeated. Yet exercising despite this compulsory vigilance, an ingenuous spirit towards the applicants for admission to the ranks of the brotherhood, they contemplate the event, with an equally intense, though different interest. The people are interested, even more largely than they, themselves, appreciate. So far as regards the building up of an institution reflecting directly upon the prosperity of the city—contributing to its scientific status, and adding to its revenue, its importance is at once acknowledged. Yet their real interest extends far beyond these subordinate considerations. The reflecting portion, whether belonging to the higher, or lower ranks, realize, as social beings, their relative position in regard to the Medical profession, and appreciate the importance of the true science and art of Medicine to its fullest extent. But the individuals comprising another portion are often the dupes of the designing. The empiric seizes them for his prey. Yielding to the impulse of fear at the threatening approach of disease,—a fear excited by the heart's tenderest sympathies, the judgment is overpowered. Flattered by caress, cajoled by sophistry, deceived by falsehood, they are easily led to a misapprehension of the true relations of things. Disabuse their minds, and these persons acquiesce in the conclusions derived from the palpable demonstrations of science. As members of the body politic, they have an interest in knowing what manner of men they are, who go forth, empowered to act as the guardians of the public health.

The test alluded to requires 1st. That the candidate for collegiate honors shall have reached the age of legal majority. This furnishes a guaranty that the judgment has been matured. 2dly. That he shall have pursued a course of study in the various branches of Medical science, under a private preceptor for three years. This period has, by common consent, been affixed, as the shortest time, in which as a general rule, the student can acquire that amount of knowledge, which is absolutely necessary to render him a safe practitioner. In no period short of this, is it possible for him to qualify himself, unless he possesses a power of intellect,—concentration of thought, and vividness of perception, that very few can lay claim to. And if we take the testimony

of the most brilliant luminaries in the constellation of genius, based upon their own experience, and a survey of the field of study, we should be disposed to extend the term. 3dly. This course is inclusive of attendance on two full courses of Lectures in some regularly organized and legally authorized College. The conjoint labors of seven instructors selected from the mass of the profession who are believed to possess superior attainments, and an aptness to teach, are thus brought to bear upon the mind of the student. The division of labor in accordance with this arrangement secures a collation of the latest intelligence, experimental and practical facts, and the latest discoveries. The attention of each is concentrated upon his own particular department. The student thus derives the advantage of corrigenda.—Hypothetical opinions based upon the limited knowledge of older writers give place to the revelations of scientific discovery in its onward progress. New and beautiful truths are presented to his mind. The curriculum of study embraced in these lectures, comprise the structure of man's material organization; the physiological laws which govern the actions of its complex elements, the pathological phenomena which characterize its departure from the healthy standard, in multitudinous and multiform variety; the chemical laws which affect it, in health and disease; the properties, powers, doses and modes of administration of remedies; the application of all known means of cure, according to therapeutical principles, in order to bring back the diseased functions to their healthy condition, the reparation by surgical operation, of injuries suffered through accident or design; the removal of the dangers and accidents connected with reproduction: the medico-legal relations of crimes, of criminal responsibility, and moral accountability; the adoption of hygienic rules for the prolongation of life, and consequently the promotion of social and domestic happiness; and the accomplishment of the noblest aims of political economy. Lastly, it embraces virtually the philosophy of the human mind, and directly the means necessary for its restoration, from the aberrations, hallucinations, delusions, and perversions of all its functions, both intellectual and moral. That a science so comprehensive in its scope, should require untiring diligence, and good capacity, is obvious to all. It is obvious also that it is intimately associated with various collateral sciences, a knowledge of which becomes necessary to a thorough understanding of the true practical application of the principles of Medical science; and to the perfection of a thoroughly educated and accomplished physician. Their relations to Medical science proper are very intimate, and can

never be dissevered. 4thly. The fourth requisite embraced in the conditions of graduation, is the documentary evidence of good moral character. A consistent adherence to truth and rectitude, and the expurgation of the profession from charlatanic and unworthy characters, renders the adoption of such a rule indispensable.

The application of the test, with a reasonable degree of rigidity, is an imperative duty, incumbent on the faculty. And this brings us to the particular event which the exercises of this evening are designed to commemorate.

Several gentlemen before us, to whom I must now address myself, have submitted to the necessary examination, and have been found worthy.

Gentlemen, the honorable and praiseworthy aspirations which have hitherto animated your souls, have reached the period of fruition. Hope is realized. The weary toil of years meets its reward in the approbation of your instructors. Often while trimming the midnight lamp, have you looked forward with bright anticipations to this event. The daily task, the nocturnal vigil, has oftentimes discouraged you, and for the moment made the accomplishment of your desires seem almost beyond the bounds of possibility. But by summoning your energies to renewed exertion, you have persevered. A guiding star has been seen in the distance, beckoning you to pursue untiringly the objects of your laudable ambition.

You are about to enter the arena of active usefulness, under the auspices of a legally authorized board of examiners. A change takes place in the relation which you have sustained towards the Institution, the profession and the public. While, however, this is not the ultimatum of your aspirations and hopes, neither should it terminate your studious habits, nor abate your devotion to your favorite science. The goal which you have reached, is but a resting place, from which you can, view in retrospect, the ground over which you have passed. Medical science is progressive, and therefore to keep pace with its development, your efforts should be continuous. Its periscope embraces a range almost *ad infinitum*. For proof of this, you have but to notice in addition to the general topics already cited, the special revelations of microscopic Anatomy, of Physiology, of Pathology, and of organic Chemistry. Each of these is sufficient to absorb a life-time. And we could never avail ourselves of the results of persevering investigation in those departments, were it not for the division of labor, which taste and inclina-

tion have made. We are furnished by each collaborator with the results ascertained in his line of investigation, and thus we are enabled to appropriate them to ourselves, and to apply them to practical purposes, in common with the previously accumulated resources of our art. To this perseverance, you are encouraged by the brilliant examples of those who have gone before. There is no royal road to the temple of science. Its worshippers must be ever watchful, ever studious, looking upward and onward. By vigilance and perseverance, your predecessors have attained distinction. The mantle of their honors will fall upon their faithful successors.

In these Halls, didactic instruction has been imparted to you for a series of months, in all the elementary principles of the profession of your choice. In order duly to regulate their application, so as to enable you successfully to fulfil your vocation, and thus to accomplish the great purpose of life, a few parting words of advice derived from observation and experience, may be necessary.

The auspicious future opens before you, beaming with renewed hope. You go forth upon no doubtful mission. The ideas which have occupied your minds from the date of your entrance upon the period of pupilage have been by no means chimerical—the offspring of mere imagination and prejudice—but founded in truth. We trust you have been inspired in a truthful manner, with confidence in the resources of your art. Truth will guide you in the exercise of its solemn duties. Candid inquiry has satisfied your minds of the correctness of your position. And the more extensively you pursue your investigation, and the more fully you institute a comparison between the true science of Medicine, and the vaunting pretensions of empiricism, in its thousand forms, the more worthy of your profoundest admiration will that science appear. By applying the principles which have been inculcated in your minds, you will be conducted to the therapeutical application of remedies adapted to fulfil the requirements of diseased nature, by a process of philosophical induction. By disregarding those precepts, you will be in danger of falling into the errors of the routinist, who follows implicitly a beaten track, unable to give an intelligible reason for a single prescription he makes; or of manifesting the improprieties, which mark the conduct of the empiric.

In view of the temptations to irregular practices which will beset your path, it may be proper here to advert to the topic of our Introductory Discourse, and to present a few remarks corroborative of the positions

therein taken. You will remember that on that occasion, the opinion was expressed that there were three fundamental and essential qualifications, without which none can lay claim to the title of physician, viz. : 1st. The possession of a *power of intellect* at least equal to the average of mankind. 2dly. The acquisition of a *knowledge of Medical science*, brought down to the period when the student merges into the practitioner, and 3dly. *Sound moral principle*. In support of the asseveration, it was argued that an analysis of these elementary conditions, would render at once apparent, the obvious truth, that if any one is wanting, just in that proportion, is the capacity for discharging the duties of the physician impaired. It was contended that mere intellectual endowment, diligence of application, tenacity of memory, or conscientiousness, taken singly, could never be relied upon. The co-operation of all is absolutely necessary to success. As far as the first condition is concerned, it is but reasonable that such a degree of mental capacity should be required, as would insure to the individual a fair chance of success, in any department of industry in which he might engage. The time has gone by, when the most talented of a family should be reserved for the profession of the law, and the least capable, with impunity palmed on the Clerical or Medical professions. The power of judgment which is necessarily called into exercise in a complicated case, demands that if a selection is made, he who is the most liberally endowed, should be assigned the post of Medical adviser. That close application is equally indispensable, will be apparent to any reasonable mind, upon the most superficial survey of the extent of the science. And when we consider that "knowledge is power," none will deny that that power, when not directed by moral principle, will be dangerous in proportion to its extent. The man who seeks to enter the ranks of the Medical profession for the mere purpose of accumulating wealth, will never be a trust-worthy practitioner. A motive higher and nobler than that must operate upon his mind, in order to render his actions unexceptionable.

Even if all these conditions have been complied with, in spirit, and to the letter, rendering the individual humanly speaking, a pattern of perfection; he is not thenceforth exempt from the vexations and disappointments which belong to all departments of human enterprize. The road to fortune and fame, although opened widely for him, is not one unvarying gentle smooth acclivity, strewn with roses, begirt with elysian fields, the songs of birds ever and anon carolling in his ears—naught but smiles and cheers to greet him at each step of his progress! He has

earned a share of these favors, but often the purposes of truth and justice are thwarted, and he may find his claims disputed. Instead of receiving a just reward, his exertions may sometimes be repaid with ingratitude.

Scientific Medicine has, in all ages been opposed by empiricism. In the early ages, even its own faithful disciples entertained the crudest notions. For the means of cure, they relied upon the meagre collections derived from fortuitous discovery. Nothing had been reduced to systematic arrangement. Superstition was fertile in invention. Dreams, charms, and incantations were believed capable of working miraculous cures.—In the times of the ancient Mythology, from the belief that many diseases were inflicted as a punishment, by the offended Gods, it was no uncommon circumstance for their aid to be invoked both as a prophylactic and a curative means. The history of Medicine abounds with facts illustrative of the imperfection of the science at that period, and of intense interest to the Medical philosopher, inasmuch as it furnishes a *point de depart*, with which to compare the astonishing progress towards perfection, since attained. For centuries it has kept pace with all the departments of natural science, seizing upon every available means afforded by all the three kingdoms of nature, and applying them to the relief of human suffering. Many, many years, however, elapsed, before its facts and principles were classified in such a manner as to make it comprehensive. Then, as is now the case with system mongers, a hobby was seized upon. A single idea was made a radiating point, from which every thing relating to Medicine received a bias. Facts were distorted, in order to support a theory, instead of theory being adopted as a rational and probable explanation of accumulated facts. The love of novelty,—a passion for the marvellous—has always given great scope for the schemes of the designing. Systems have sprung up in all ages, and have been promulgated with wonderful zeal and perseverance. Some have contained within themselves the elements of speedy dissolution, and consequently have had but an ephemeral existence. Others, directed by the cupidity of their mercenary votaries, however absurd their pretensions intrinsically, have won upon the credulity of the people, and spun out their day. With a score or a hundred systems attacking it on every side, the Genius of Medicine has kept on the even tenor of its way, achieving age by age, splendid triumphs over the folly, and ignorance, and prejudice of mankind; quietly reserving even for those who have been wheedled into the ranks of its enemies, a healing balm

for their wounds; knowing that when they have made the circuit of the various systems of quackery, they will with broken constitutions and empty purses apply to the physician for relief.

In these days, nothing can outstrip the effrontery of quack-doctors. Formerly they were content with their never crasing self-adulations boasting of some universal Panacea competent to heal, as by magic, all the ills that flesh is heir to. They would ramble about with their huge saddle bags, filled with roots, weeds, snakes oil, and a museum of other curiosities, looking like a pair of Italian panniers upon an ass. They would discover in the eyes of every child they saw, indications of worms, or rickets in the bowels; and always had in readiness a root, which when stewed up, would be a dead shot against ailments of the "in'ards"—as they say in Kentucky, "certain and sure." The old folks had the Rheumatiz; or were "pisoned with Mercury and bleeding," and nothing short of a "course" would work it out. The capacity of the stomach of the patient, was estimated like a modern Omnibus, "how many will it hold." The itinerant Esculapian had a variety of remedies for fits, dried-up liver, and female weakness. The latter disease since the elucidations of Madame Oakes Smith and others, however, is among the things that were. It will not do now, for any candidate for popular favor to intimate its existence.—"Reform !" is the watch-word. The forms of law are adopted,—the organization of Colleges imitated, and a body of men will gravely go through the motions with as much solemnity, and as much hrazen assumption as if in the deepest earnest, instead of making fun. The barber does the Military Chapeau and exclaims dignifiedly and then ferociously: "I am a General!" Reform ! he cries. An agrarian spirit seizes the modern mountebank Doctor. He must bring down every man of distinction to his level. "Down with monopolies ! Cure your own bodies, make your own wills, and pray for your own souls !" The response of Punch may here be aptly quoted, when he exclaims: "Down with every think !" Mere change will not do now-a-days. In theory it must be a thorough, fundamental, out and out reform. In order that it may take, you must go to the extreme of transcendentalism. From the use of physic by the pailful, one wing of the reformers, require you to take the quintessence of the infinite subdivision of a "*null part*." According to certain notions concerning Natural Philosophy, heretofore inculcated, we have been led to suppose that matter, as well as spirit had an existence, and that matter possessed a certain property called *vis inertia*, by which if it

were desired to move a body of a pound weight, it was necessary to apply a force equal to a pound in weight. But now we see the folly of such notions. Matter can now act where it is not, abrogating another law. We are brought back to the Berkleian Philosophy. We are the shadows of ourselves.—Etherealized spiritualism will do for us that which we imagined was resultant from the employment of physical means.

You may sometimes feel discouraged, because the people do not at once appreciate your services, but will run from one empirical scheme to another, upon hearing the arrogant pretensions of their promulgators. It is said of Radcliffe, that when meeting a celebrated quack on one occasion, he asked how it was that the quack got so large a practice, and he, himself, at that time, so little. Said the charlatan, "Look at this stream of people passing by. How many of them do you think, are intelligent, careful, thinking, and reasonable beings? "Perhaps one in a hundred," was the answer. "Well," rejoined the quack, "you get that one and I get the ninety nine." This is true to some extent. Imposters, believing the infatuation to be boundless, have taken advantage of it to enrich themselves at the expense of the people. The evil suggests a remedy—*Educate* the people. Here and there, a man of talent will be found willing to lend himself to a knavish quack, and his pretended *system*, prostituting his talent to base purposes. But there is a redeeming quality in the people—common sense, which will appreciate truth, when rightly and perseveringly presented to them. True, it is to the Philanthropist and the man of science, a most humiliating spectacle, to witness a creature ignorant of the first principles of Medical science, amassing a splendid fortune, by palming upon thousands of persons, a common every-day prescription, which could be got at any Apothecary's shop, claiming for it the properties of a universal *panacea*, by which is incurred the risk of injury in every case, to which it is not adapted. Falsehood must be resorted to, in order to practice successfully upon the credulity of the people—to make them believe there is a specific virtue in a nostrum. And this falsehood lies at the foundation of all quackery. But truth is mighty and will prevail.

"Let truth and falsehood grapple—"

Whoever knew truth to be put to the worse, in a free and open encounter."

It is often asserted that Medical science is only a collection of old opinions, and makes no advancement—that it employs chiefly mine.

ral substances, and leaves the resources of the Vegetable kingdom, almost untouched. This is one of the means of deception. If it were worth a reply, I need but cite to the splendid works of Pereira, to the inimitable Medical Botany of Stephenson and Churchill in England, and the magnificent works of Richard and others in France. But those who make such assertions are incapable of conviction. Like Goldsmith's schoolmaster, tho' vanquished, they will argue still. The truth is that no department of Natural science has been left unexplored by the physician. The march of discovery is constantly progressive. There is now a large corps of indefatigable students, who are pursuing original investigation in various specialies, extending their research far into regions hitherto unexplored, sacrificing their lives at the shrine of science, from a love of its inherent beauties alone. It may be safely asserted, that within the last decennial period, a greater amount of contributions have been made to Medical and the collateral sciences than in all time previous.

Again in support of the assertion alluded to, you may be pointed to self-styled regular practitioners, whose attainments are woefully deficient, and whose want of success corresponds with their ignorance. This class consists of persons who commence the study of Medicine solely from a desire to reap its emoluments. They devote as little time as possible,—often but three or six months,—to the acquirement of a smattering knowledge—seldom attend lectures, and never submit to an examination. Such persons you will of course disclaim. They are physicians but in name, and have no right to assume it. Their mere connection in some partial way with regular medicine does not entitle them to be ranked as practitioners. For the sacrifice of life, which in the order of human probabilities, must inevitably result from their incompetence, you are not responsible, neither is the profession responsible. Every respectable practitioner, and every Medical teacher is morally bound to discountenance such practices.

“A little learning is a dangerous thing,
 Drink deep, or drink not of the Pierian spring,
 For shallow draughts intoxicate the brain,
 And drinking largely sobers us again.”

In adverting to the mercenary spirit, which is too often allowed to preponderate, I would not be understood to advise that in the prosecution of the more exalted purposes of science, the practitioner should neglect a prudent oversight of his monetary affairs. With the enthu-

siastic student, passionately devoted to scientific pursuits. this is liable to occur. There are few who look with any degree of commiseration upon his pecuniary sacrifices. It is therefore necessary that he should have a proper consideration for his own welfare, and the claims of those who are dependent upon him. "The labourer is worthy of his hire."

The practice of Medicine is a noble calling. The motives which I have presented, for your rigid adherence to legitimate Medicine, consist chiefly of the pleasure derived from the study, in a scientific point of view. But there is a more exalted aspect still,—the philanthropic. It is as a scheme of humanity that it claims our highest regard. The pecuniary consideration, based upon time devoted and services rendered for the benefit of others, and the intellectual pleasure derived from the study, are incidental. A just appreciation of its bearings as a philanthropic enterprize, permitting this highest motive to control the others, will render you thoroughly competent to exercise your functions in an acceptable manner.

Permit me, gentlemen, to offer you, in the name, and in behalf of the faculty, our most sincere congratulations upon your success. By your conduct as gentlemen, and as students, you have merited our approbation. The diligence of your application resulting in the attainment of the Doctorate, we trust is an earnest of an auspicious, and yet more successful career in the future.

But in bidding you God speed, it becomes my duty also in their behalf, to charge you that you eschew all unworthy, dishonorable, and unprofessional practices. Humanly speaking, the issues of life and death are in your hands. The temporal happiness of families and communities will be at your disposal. How fearful the responsibility involved in the faithful discharge of so sacred a trust! Some of us have seen the fairest flower of a family stricken down by the hand of ignorance and presumption. See that you sever not the ties of consanguine affection, by inattention on the one hand, or rash presumption on the other. Endeavor at all times to bring to your aid, calmness of judgment, frankness of manner, conscientiousness of purpose, in the sick room. While you swerve not from principle, but maintain it with inflexible resolution, consider the weakness of human nature. Make all due allowance for popular prejudice. "A soft answer turneth away wrath." Be kind to your patients and ingenuous to your fellow-practitioners. Pursue an upright and honorable course in all your dealings. Let modesty characterize your demeanor. By respectfu

conduct towards others, seek to gain the respect and lasting support of your fellow-citizens. Persevere in well doing in all these respects, and you will merit an enduring fame. Let your course be such, that your instructors may hear of your good report, and exclaim with proud emulation, and in the fulness of their hearts, "These are our sons!" And when in the lapse of time, your Alma Mater enlarges her boundaries, and rears her lofty turrets to the skies, may it be your proudest recollection, that your names are registered in her archives among the first of her trophies.—Go! and fulfil your vocation; and may the blessing of God go with you.
